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The South India CHURCHMAN

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The Magazine of the Church of South India

● SEPTEMBER 1992

TRIBUTES TO THE MOST REVD. DR. B. RYDER DEVAPRIAM



Face to face Lord I know you . . .

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Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

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SEPTEMBER 1992

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Phone: 471266

All remittances and communications regarding subscriptions and advertisements to be sent to the Hon. Business Manager.

HON. AGENT IN U.K.

Rev. J. L. Thomas, Bronheulwen Chapel Lawn Road

Bucknell, Shropshire Sy 7 OAH, UK

Tel. No. 05 474 675

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION PER ANNUM

Subscription in India	Rs. 25.00
Single Copy	Rs. 3.00

SUBSCRIPTION OVERSEAS

	<i>Sea Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
U. S. A.	\$ 4.00	\$ 9.00
U. K.	£ 2.50	£ 6.00
Australia	\$ 5.00	\$ 10.00
New Zealand	\$ 5.00	\$ 10.00

25 Years Ago!

It was Peter who ran with John that first Easter morn-
to the tomb, hearing that the Lord's body had disappeared.
It was he who entered in with John and, with him, believed.
And, remembering that unforgettable moment, he writes, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great love begat us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet. 1, 3). It was by that hope that Peter lived. It is by that hope we live also.

H. K. MOUN-
Churchman,

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"Lest we Forget"



Hit by a thunder clap. That is precisely how everyone, as the shattering news of the sudden death of the late moderator Ryder Devapriam flashed over the telephones.

Of course, there were the 'Stop Kiddings', 'cut the ps' and 'excuse me, but I'm in no mood to be trifled with', that follow such shock news. Yes, people were speechless and struck dumb. Telephones and telexes clicked and buzzed away to confirm.

Meteoric was his rise. What a trial the meteor blazed! Absolutely no hype and no frills, he brought a refreshing touch to the august office he held. The nicest thing about him is that he knew the value of words, yet he was never at ease with anyone. A perfect thinker, he never allowed anything personal or otherwise to come between him and his official dealings. If there is one thing that he will be remembered most for, it is this: the fine balance he weighed in all matters.

One very little known fact about him was his love for music. Even a casual visit to his home would send one away musically enriched. 'Face to face with Jesus' is one of his favourite choruses and as it was told, this was the chorus which the late moderator taught to a congregation at Heubach, Germany... face to face with Jesus.

Did he know it coming? One would think so, going by the words he let drop before leaving. He was literally obsessed with his own death and left clear instruction about where he should be buried, lest we forget. He sleeps peacefully under a tamarind tree in the cathedral compound at Nandyal. May his soul rest in peace.

Not in the living memory has any other funeral been so impressive. All roads leading to the Cathedral were lined with people, scooters and cars. So much so that traffic police had to be called in. But there was no stopping the people. They climbed the trees and walls to pay their last respects to the departed leader.

It was a perfect funeral. Scores of wreaths representing dioceses and various other organisations had been placed around the coffin.

Bishop P. Victor Premasagar, the former moderator, along with the Vice-Chairman Rev. B. P. Sugandhar, the Treasurer Rev. B. Prabhakar Rao, Rev. Devavaram, Mr. Emmanuel, the Secretaries, received the coffin at the Hyderabad Airport. A meaningful Service was conducted at the airport in which many a clergy and hundreds of people took part. Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, the honourable Prime Minister who successfully contested to the Parliament from the Nandyal constituency, sent a wreath through the Governor's office. The Church is thankful to the Prime Minister for his intervention to lift the body from Germany on time.

The admirable way the Heubach Church and the K.N.H. Germany arranged for the flight of the body deserves special mention. Mr. Frank the Director of the K.N.H., with proverbial German efficiency, got the body safely placed in a luxury coffin and followed it all the way from Stuttgart to Nandyal. Mr. C. Bedford, the director of the C.C.C. who was visiting in Germany also accompanied it. Prof. George Koshy, the General Secretary, Mr. Lessley Nathaniel went to Bombay to receive the coffin and followed it to Nandyal. The officers of the Nandyal diocese, Rev. Sangeetha Rao, Mr. Samuel Ashirvadam and several clergy and lay leaders came to Hyderabad to take the body to Nandyal. Mrs. Sarojini Ryder Devapriam, Prema their daughter and Ravi, moderator's brother were conspicuous by their presence.

A galaxy of venerable persons including the Deputy Moderator, Bishop Jason Dharmaraj, Bishop L. V. Azariah, Bishop P. Victor Premasagar, Bishop Sam Amirtham, Bishop Dandin, Bishop Pothirajulu, Bishop Shettian, Bishop William Moses, Bishop Theodore, Bishop John, Bishop Anandaram Samuel, Bishop R. T. Bhaskaran and Bishop C.D. Jathanna delivered the funeral orations. The Honorary Treasurer of the Synod, Mr. D. P. Kingsley and his wife, Mrs. George Koshy, Dr. George Joseph, Revd. Miss Ammana, the General Secretary of the Women's Fellowship Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam, Mr. Mac Donald and the faculty members of the Andhra Christian Theological College and several heads of the institutions were present. Almost all the dioceses of the C.S.I. were represented by their leaders.

At the memorial service held later, rich tributes were paid by the Bishop Jason Dharmaraj, the Deputy Moderator, Bishop L. V. Azariah, Prof. George Koshy, Mr. Frank (K.N.H.) Rev. Dass Babu, Mr. Rajaram, Mr. Vinayakumar and Mr. Lessley. The service was chaired by Bishop N. D. Anandaram Samuel. Rev. Sangeetha Rao, Mr. Samuel Ashirvadam, were on the podium.

At the end of the service Mrs. Sarojini Devapriam, Mr. Ravi, the brother of the late moderator and the moderator's mother thanked all those who came to attend the funeral.

Shortly before he was to leave for Germany, the late moderator suggested to me to do a series introducing our dioceses. Each piece would be an in-depth picture of the

diocese. This was just one of the scores of interesting projects he was working on before he was cut down when he was settling into the saddle, so to speak. In the issues that follow in near future, the 'South India Churchman' will be treating its readers to an exciting and exploratory journeys to the sister dioceses.

Surprisingly 'Lest we Forget', the three-word caption was what the late moderator suggested to me to head each story. Where and how better to remember him, lest we forget.

The Most Revd. Dr. Billa Ryder Devapriam's mark on the C.S.I. was brief and deep. His tragic death would remind us of his need for quite some time.

DASS BABU

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

UNITY IN GRIEF

Death comes often mercifully with some prior notice—illness or old age. But sometimes it strikes us mercilessly with no prior indication. It happened in the later manner in the case of our dear revered moderator the Most Rev. Dr. Ryder B. Devapriam.

May be such language is profane. To use the language of faith, our Moderator was taken into the *priyam* (love) of our *deviam* (God), in God's providence. A mystery beyond our understanding, before which we can only stand in submission and silence.

The news of the death of the Moderator while visiting churches in Germany sent shock waves all through the CSI. Grief, even disbelief, was the mood. The uncertainty of the time of funeral increased the agony and anxiety. Many many Christians prayed for God's comfort on Sarojini Devapriam, Prema the daughter and her family, and the diocese.

Thousands of Christians from Nandyal, nearby dioceses and from all over the CSI attended the funeral service on 12th September at 10 a.m. The officers of the diocese and the Synod had made all possible arrangements. The helpfulness and politeness of the volunteers were exemplary. The Government had made special facilities, including police band and escort as a mark of respect to the late Moderator. A special message from the Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao was also gratefully received, Nandyal being his own constituency.

A Christian funeral is an occasion of sadness, but also hope. The singing in the Bishop's home by village choirs throughout the previous night, gave not the impression of mourning on earth, but rejoicing in heaven. After all, death is not just the end of life here, but the beginning of life beyond. When Moderator Devapriam visited the South Kerala Diocese, he had reminded us of the meaning of following Christ, the suffering and joy of taking up the cross, and the rootedness of our faith in the resurrection hope.

The Moderator's mother was calm, her face reflecting the certainty and maturity of her faith. I was yet again reminded that many a leader of the Indian Church has

been nurtured by the faith and trust, the hope and courage, the commitment and dedication of their parents and grandparents. A very painful experience for me in my ministry is when old parents have to face the death of their adult children. I was lost for words in trying to console. But she consoled us! 'I will probably be the early one to meet my son in heaven', were her words, as reported to us.

Sarojini also had controlled her grief bravely. She could not say any meaningful words of comfort except that we shared her grief and our Lord Himself who was at Lazarus' grave was sharing in our grief. Her courage was an expression of her faith in the Lord, whom she and her husband served so faithfully and so daringly.

Ryder endeared himself to most dioceses in this service period since January of this year. His theological convictions were brought to bear upon the decisions of Commissions and Committees. He had a Biblical view of justice and a Christian concern for the poor. At the last meeting of the Theological Commission, he was asked us to take up the issue of a post-liberation dalith theology in the caste ridden context of India. Many congregations got to know him. One of the congregations in my diocese, Christ Church, Kollam, made a spontaneous condolence resolution in their Committee, which probably summed up the sentiments of many a parish.

'Most Rev. Ryder Devapriam was known for his piety and scholarship and he has made his mark as head of the CSI within a very short time. We thank God for the life and witness of this great servant of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

The funeral procession through the town was an act of Christian witness. The Moderator was buried under an old tamarind tree in the Cathedral compound, as he himself had wished. The emotional outburst of the crowd, throwing flower petals into the air, as the Deputy Moderator said the words 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust', was very touching. Bishop Jason Dharmaraj reaffirmed the victory of faith over death. He said

(Contd. on p. 3)

SEPTEMBER 1991

Good News and Culture*

RT. REV. DR. P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR, *Medak*

Last Monday we celebrated the feast of Epiphany, when the child Jesus was visited and worshipped by the wise men from the East, who offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It reminds us of the eastern cultural and religious tradition of taking gifts to Kings, of offering flowers to the gods and receiving help and blessings from them. The good news of Jesus Christ has been received in different nations in terms of their languages, cultures and religions. This process of reception into different heritages in the course of time, also influenced the good news.

In the absence of surety and assurance, religion and culture provided a world-view to cope with the exigencies of life. The experience and wisdom of a people—their technical skills, fine arts, implements and artifacts indicate the way in which they met their needs. Memory of tradition helped in forming customs to ease the tension, and culture provided stability, assurance and satisfaction within the community.

Ancient cultures preserve their religious world views and challenges of their context and how they helped people to cope with life. Culture and customs governed the relationships, duties and responsibilities in a community. Often siding with the elite, the powerful and the oppressors permanently depriving the poor and the weak and denying them the advantages of development. Even language and grammar reflect culturally oppressive and exploitative state of affairs.

The Israelite Heritage

In the early traditions of the patriarchs, the Exodus and the settlement in Canaan, the Yahweh religion of the nomadic Hebrew tribes was greatly influenced by the settled people—Canaanite religion and culture. The idea of God as the creator of the universe, their laws, the Canaanites relating to agricultural communities, kingship, the care for the widow, the orphan and the stranger, were all influenced by the Canaanites heritage. But while they had received the theological, religious and cultural heritage of the settled people, these receptions were governed by the critical principle of the prophetic religion in Israel. The call of Israel to be God's people, the covenant relationship with God and the people, the covenant, raised prophetic discontent about the social, economic, political life of the people, organized against the will of the God of all the nations. They demanded justice and righteousness in all community transactions, business and politics. The prophets spoke against inhuman and immoral activities of the nations around them and warned Israel against worship of such

gods, and their religious and cultural practices. The prophetic discontent has been seen as exclusiveness in Israel, but the prophets also condemned such inhuman and immoral practices in Israel in the name of Yahweh. It was the world view of the religion and culture of the people that influenced their social, economic and political life. The covenant relation in Israel ensured fair and just dealing in all human relations. The cities of refuge were set up (Num. 35:6) to ensure a fair trial and justice, even when a person was suspected of murder. Retribution was often administered without ascertaining the truth of the matter. Israel under Yahweh learned to be human and be just in dealing with such highly emotional and tense situations. While accepting the theological ideas and cultural practices of the nations around them, Israel were guided by the prophetic critique of such ideas and practices:

1. Yahweh is the creator of the whole universe and the only God. He is just and righteous, demands justice and righteousness from all people including his own people Israel.

2. While taking the religious and cultural practices of the Canaanites into the Yahweh faith, the prophets made sure that this did not go against the character and revelation of Yahweh. Kingship was accepted in Israel but without allowing the King to have a different code of ethical conduct from that demanded of all his people by God. When Kingship had failed they looked for a kingdom of righteousness, justice, peace and compassion which God would establish in the whole world. They looked for a King, the anointed one of the Lord, who would bring about justice, righteousness and peace in the world. They spoke of the time of the Kingdom of God, when nations will turn their weapons of war into agricultural implements and engage in peaceful pursuits. The wild animals will give up their carnivorous nature and become herbivorous, even the serpent will not hurt the child playing upon its habitat. In the Kingdom, God will strengthen the weak and the handicapped, the captives will be set free and the poor will receive the good news that God shall come on their side changing the age old oppressions sanctioned by religions, cultures and world views, which favoured the rich and elite and established social, economic, and political systems against them. Nature itself is to be transformed being liberated from the futility to which it has been subjected. Waters will flow in the desert, trees will come up in the waste places, flowers will bloom and yield fruit to all living beings. Thus, the prophets were looking for a new world, fulfilling the purposes of the creator God for his whole creation.

3. With this world view of a just and righteous creator God of the whole universe, Israel affirmed monotheism over against henotheism. Henotheism was the

early religious view in Israel, when they worshipped Yahweh as their own God, while acknowledging other gods worshipped by other nations. Monotheism proclaimed by Isaiah and as certain Psalms declare, has no other god but Yahweh, who is the creator, sustainer and consumator of the whole universe. This perspective made the Israelite theologians affirm that Yahweh is the God of all nations and that other gods are diverse revelations of God, in different places and different times, to their fathers but now fully revealed to Moses as Yahweh as the only God. They affirmed that Yahweh is the god of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and thus related Yahweh faith to tribal deities of the patriarchs. The theological insights about God in the Canaanite religion were also affirmed of Yahweh as the only creator God.

4. This just and righteous God of the whole earth has called Israel to be chosen people, with the purpose of becoming a blessing to all nations. In the prophetic view, they saw their role as the servants of Yahweh to bring light to the nations, proclaim the good news that Yahweh is judging the nations and vindicating the poor, the oppressed and marginalised peoples. The good news is that God has chosen Israel to be a blessing to the nations not in a passive way but nations actively claiming the blessing of the creator God for themselves.

Jesus and the Early Church

When Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, he was calling all people to this prophetic world view and God's action in inaugurating the Kingdom. The beatitudes in the Sermon on the mount, the parables of the Kingdom and Jesus own critique of the pharisaic religion of the Jews, calling for justice and righteousness and himself opting on the side of the poor and the oppressed common people. The evangelists write that Jesus had compassion on the people because they were harassed and were like sheep without a shepherd. His critique of the Sabbath, the oppressive religious laws against the poor to the extent of calling them and naming them as sinners and publicans. Jesus said he has come for them, ate with them, and had compassion on the oppressed, diseased and handicapped people. The prophetic Kingdom perspective, critiqued all the religious and cultural practices, oppressive to the poor and advantageous to the rich, and the elite. Jesus himself was crucified for his opting on the side of the poor, who were religiously and culturally ostricized. His life and teachings created new hope for the oppressed people. He declared his mission in terms of the prophet Isaiah's vision of the Kingdom when the good news will be preached to the poor, the oppressed captives released, the handicapped healed, and the jubilee year of Yahweh will be inaugurated.

As the disciples proclaimed the good news of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection, people responded to this vision of the kingdom and were baptized and formed into communities of the kingdom, setting up a style of life and community over against the religious, cultural practices of the time. They expressed concern for the poor, the widows, orphans and strangers those without any place in the community. They began to care for one another, share with one another and serve each other. As communities of the kingdom were formed as fellowships of prayer and sharing the question of religious and cultural practices, came to the forefront. The Jews insisted on their own culture as normative for the adherence of Jesus, but the Apostles championed by Paul

and Barnabas, James and Peter at the Jerusalem Council decide against this cultural oppression, and liberal entry of the Gentiles into the Christian church.

Indian Religious and Cultural Heritage

As the Gospel was preached to the ends of the earth as nations accepted the good news, the problem of place of their religious and cultural heritage became predominant issue for the new communities. When the preachers of the good news came to India from the west, they came into a country with ancient religious and cultural heritage. This was the major issue faced at the Tambaram meetings of the International Missionary Conference in 1938. Hendrick Kraemer and others called for a complete discontinuity of the Christian Gospel in relation to other religions and cultures, while theologians from Asia and Africa especially India, were called for affirming a continuity of God's revelations and actions in other nations, before the coming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The good news of Jesus Christ challenged the old religious and cultural practices in India and several reform movements in Hinduism were initiated by reformers like Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen and others. Justice Ranade of Prarthana Samaj affirmed that if God was interested in this nation called Indians, who were always disobedient and stiff-necked surely he would be interested in the teeming millions of India who worshipped him on every mountain and dipped in every holy river longing for his grace and renewal. While affirming God's revelations in religious and cultural heritage of India, it was the outcastes and no people in the community that accepted the Gospel. Churches were formed all over with hitherto oppressed and neglected peoples, who were not allowed entry into temples for worship. Though most of them were outcastes, illiterates, outside the main stream of the great religious cultural heritage of the land, they discerned in the good news of Jesus Christ, this clue of the prophetic proclamation of the Kingdom of God, that God has come on the side of the oppressed and harassed peoples and saw in Jesus, God coming out to search for them and lay down his life for them. The sufferings of Jesus upon the cross were understood as a rehearsal of centuries of their own suffering and agonies in silence and utter degradation. They could understand the essence of God's revelation in Jesus and for themselves this self-offering compassionate love of God for them. It is this critical principle that has to measure the religious and cultural heritage of all religions including Christianity. The Western empires, their expansion and colonialism, the slave trade and brutal treatment of the African people, destruction and subjugation of people in their own lands through systematic genocide and marginalisation of the native aboriginals and insensitive oppression of other nations, robbing of their lands, their wealth, and making them sub-cultures and people without any rights in their own ancestral lands—all these do not speak well of Christianity as a religion and the culture that comes with the Good News.

Religions have the tendency to sanction oppression to the powerful and elite, giving theological sanctions to oppressive and exploitative institutional social economic and political structures. The good news of Jesus Christ and the prophetic kingdom of God perspective, challenge these oppressive systems in all religions and cultures. The Christian Church down the centuries has often sided with the elite and the powerful

and in several instances there was betrayal of the good news which it is called to bear and share with all peoples.

The good news introduces critical element within these well established practices, customs, structures and institutions and provides an eternal discontent about the status quo in every generation, it raises issues from God's side, opting against seemingly innocent and peaceful world view and call for change and transformation.

The Christian Church in its worship, life and action is called to proclaim this prophetic critical element and work towards its actualisation as the Kingdom of God, siding with poor and the oppressed. It will work towards a new world order, where the poor, the marginalised women, children, tribals and outcastes will begin to share the freedom wealth and acceptance as equals at all levels of the social economic and political life of the nation. Thus all cultures redeemed from being oppressive will become human compassionate, strengthen peace, justice and freedom.

Implications for the Indian Church

Good News and Culture is a vast subject, encompassing the nations of the world, their religious experiences and cultural expressions, linguistic and artistic creations, witnessing to the development of the spirit of the nations with sensitivity to human values. I would like to suggest some important areas of action in relation to Good News and Culture in the Indian context.

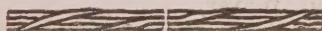
1. Songs and Lyrics should be written and sung in all our languages with Indian ragas capturing the essence of the Good News in relation to the Indian cultural heritage including the areas of obedience in our social economic and political responsibilities, deepening the sense of commitment for others and owning the liberating forces of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for renewal of the nation and communities. Several early converts from the Hindu religious and cultural heritage have written most impressive lyrics in terms of their heritage. The lyric 'Yehovana moralalinchenu, tana maha dayanu nanu ganinchenu' is written in the style and imagery of *Gajendra Mokshamu*, the story of how Lord Krishna had saved an elephant Bhakta from the clutches of an evil crocodile. Songs should also express the liberative forces of the good news of Jesus Christ breaking down barriers of caste and other discriminations, and introducing critical elements of the Gospel into the age-old oppressive social, economic and cultural institutions, bringing freedom, peace with justice in all situations. Folk music and songs are most effective in creating and communicating new concepts.

2. The prophets were proclaiming and looking for the kingdom beyond the religious and cultural heritage of the nations to the human rights and values to be upheld as covenant obligations in the community. The good news of Jesus Christ also challenged the religious cultural practices of the day and proclaimed human values, the rights of the poor and the oppressed and the obligation to serve the least among them as a service to the Lord. The limitations of the poor in fulfilling the religio-cultural demands of the dominant community, were challenged by a reinterpretation and hermeneutical exegesis of the sacred scriptural traditions and religious practices. The good news in India should help the Christian Church in committing ourselves to basic human rights and availability of basic necessities for all people irrespective of the credal and communal associations. The rights of the poor and oppressed peoples should receive the urgent attention of the Christian churches in India.

3. The jubilee year and the acceptable year of the Lord provides an opportunity for a redressal of the oppressive and exploitative social and commercial practices. The good news was associated with liberation to the captives, healing to the handicapped and ushering in the Kingdom of God. The Korean Minjung Theology speaks of redressal of the unvindicated Hananger of the hurt, and painful experiences of the common people for centuries, often resulting in violent outbursts in the communities. The demands of the good news for liberative actions on behalf of the oppressed peoples assure peace with justice. The Church through its diaconal ministries, works to bring about just relations and honest dealings in all human relations. Worship and sacramental experience of the Church should lead to commitment for action in these areas. The local congregations need to engage themselves in mission in relation to the needs and aspirations, agonies and pains of the people. The good news of God's action on behalf of the people should be initiated by the church in the community.

4. The table fellowship—*agape* suggested in VELCOM programme enhances local fellowship and breaking down of dividing walls of prejudice and caste discrimination in every local community. Eating together is the highest form of building relations among the otherwise antagonised groups in our land. Jesus ate with the publicans and sinners to the utter dismay of the elite and religious leaders. Eating together helps building fellowship, friendship and commitment to each other.

In Jesus Christ good news brings hope to all cultures and thus human values are upheld and the kingdom is actualised in our midst.



The Unorthodox Teaching

REV. S. VASANTHAKUMAR, *Bangalore*

Luke 5 : 33-39

Matthew 6 : 1-18

The spirituality of a person is normally measured on the basis of his/her observance of religious symbols. Religious symbols play a vital role in the life of a devotee. For example, it is necessary for a Muslim to attend Namaz—a corporate worship service; the Golden Temple is at the centre of spirituality of a Sikh; pilgrimage centres like Tirupathi and Sabharimalai denote for a Hindu that God is up above and human beings have to strive hard to reach him. Likewise for a Christian also religious symbols have a deeper meaning in the spiritual journey. In this Bible Study we will concentrate on three religious symbols which affect the life of a Christian deeply.

1. Observance of Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving are always interlinked. Prayer is the basic foundation on which Christian life is built. In prayer an individual converses with God and listens to God's will for him/her. In the corporate prayer an individual participates alongwith the community in establishing contact with God. Thus prayer becomes an essential element in the spiritual journey of a Christian.

In order to concentrate on God one of the methods used in prayer is fasting. Prayer and fasting are quite popular with those who are 'spiritually inclined'. Without prayer there can be no life with God. Fasting helps the individual to concentrate on God. Life on God through prayer and fasting results in extending help to the lesser privileged. Almsgiving is an outpouring of God's love to an individual. It is for this reason that many people who have attended Worship Service on a Sunday morning normally give charity to the beggars sitting near the Church gates. A person is normally considered spiritual if he/she practices fasting and prayer constantly and involves in almsgiving regularly.

Jesus was not against fasting, prayer and almsgiving. He accepts them as central to the life of his disciples. In fact he himself was involved in fasting and prayer, but what Jesus is against is the attitude where fasting and prayer become a show business. In such cases people who indulge in fasting and prayer look for appreciation and approval from human beings and not the reward from God. For Jesus religious symbols like fasting and prayer should be a matter of the heart and not an outward show to please the people around. To him individual fasting, prayer and almsgiving should be done so secretly that it becomes a matter between the individual concerned and God himself.

2. Attitude toward Holy Communion

In the passage Luke 6 : 1-5, there is an incident where the Pharisees question the disciples of Jesus about plucking of some heads of grain and rubbing them in their hands on the Sabbath day. But Jesus in return gives the example of David entering alongwith his companions the House of God and eating bread of the Presence which was supposed to be eaten only by the priests.

Strictly speaking the passage does not talk about Holy Communion. It is only an example used by Jesus to demonstrate the real meaning of Holy Elements. We too consider certain things Holy and would like to approach such elements with utmost respect. The Altar in a Church is considered Holy. This being the case not everyone can enter the Holy place. It is reserved only for the ordained persons. The elements that are used in the Holy Communion become holy after the Consecration. Therefore it should be administered only by ordained persons. Our understanding of holiness is so limited that we consider only the vessels in which the Holy elements are placed. Thus in many Churches many lay people hesitate to touch the vessels even while receiving the Sacraments. In our anxiety to stress the need for preparation before participating in Communion we teach that the Sacraments should be taken on an empty stomach. We have given ourselves a theology that if we improperly participate in the Sacrament then we will incur the wrath of God which has resulted in many Christians avoiding participation in the Communion. In other words, in our anxiety to maintain the sanctity of the Holy elements we have created a fear complex in the minds of believers.

Jesus by citing the incident of David mentioned above is implying that the barrier between sacred and secular is broken down. God's presence is available for everyone who seeks it and consecrated bread and wine is available to every believer to participate in it without any hesitation. It is not a ritualistic attitude that Jesus is looking for but he is looking for our right attitude towards Holy Communion. Holy Communion is a gift from God freely available to his children and we need to participate in it with a joyful heart and not with a fearful heart.

3. Observance of the Sacred Day

For us Christians Sunday is a very important day. We have been brought up in such a manner that we automatically consider Sunday as a sacred day. I remember as a boy when some of us used to go to the playground near the Church to play, our Pastor used to send us home saying, 'Christians are not supposed to play games on Sunday'. Like the Jews we Christians also take the observance of Sabbath Sunday very seriously.

Jesus by healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath demonstrates that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Observance of Sabbath as a Holy day was a sign of Israel's special covenantal relationship with God. It was a gift of God to make Israel more holy. It was a blessing and not a burden. It was meant to be used to testify to the goodness of God and not to hide the goodness of God from others. It was meant to do good to others.

In our anxiety to observe Sunday as a sacred day we have become so legalistic that it becomes very difficult to follow the rules and regulations that we have laid down for ourselves. The religious symbol of Sunday being

a sacred day is to be understood as a day set apart to establish a covenant relationship with God and to do good to others.

Thus Jesus was not against religious symbols but he was against the constricting laws surrounding religious symbols. Jesus was unorthodox in his teaching. He was looking for the proper internal attitude towards religious symbols and not external showmanship. The spirituality of a person therefore need not be measured on the basis of his/her external manifestation of religious symbols but it should be measured on the basis of that person's right attitude towards God and good works towards fellow human beings, particularly to the lesser privileged.

Contd. from p. 2)

God the Father breathing into Adam brought life into humanity, so the breathing of the Son into the disciples and the Holy Spirit brought eternal life to humanity. Many lives were wet, as the body was laid to rest.

Grief unites people. For, grief moves hearts, even very stony ones. A joy shared is a joy doubled, a grief shared in grief halved, goes the saying. The grief of the evangelist's family was shared literally by thousands of families in the church and outside the church. Bereavement brings persons together. Tragedy strikes chords of sympathy.

Sharing this grief, my friend, J. W. Gladstone made an insightful remark. Such occasions also manifest the unity of the church, something I had not thought of

earlier. Joyous celebrations and festivals unite the church; Meetings of Synod and Councils do; Consecrations and ordinations do; Funerals and tragic losses also unite the church. Despite all differences of denominations and theologies, despite any power-craving and self-seeking there is this gift of unity that binds us all together in the body of Christ, that is the CSI. Common commitment to Christ provides a bond that no force of evil can destroy. We know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. And it is, as we are drawn nearer to Christ that we are drawn nearer to each other; in moments of joy surely; but also in moments of grief. Yes, indeed, I have seen, *grief unites*.

SAM AMIRTHAM
Bishop

The Bible Society of India

is on the look out for enterprising persons committed to Bible Cause for the post of **Media Officer** to be stationed at **Andhra Pradesh** and **Kerala**. The applicant should be a **Graduate with proficiency in written and spoken English** as well as **Telugu/Malayalam** preferably in the age group of 25-35. Candidates with experience in the production of Audio/Video Media Programmes, with good knowledge of the Bible are preferred. Extensive travel would be involved. In deserving cases, age and/or qualification will be relaxed. Pay scale Rs. 980—30—1,220—40—1,900 plus other allowances. (Gross Salary Rs. 1,950/- approximately in the minimum of the scale). Second class train fare by the shortest route plus 10% towards incidental expenses will be paid for attending interview.

Application on plain paper with detailed resume of age, education, training, work experience, salary now drawing and expected salary, etc., should be mailed to the **General Secretary, Bible Society of India, 206, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore-560 001** to reach him by **21st September, 1992**.



Tributes from All Over

MODERATOR BILLA RYDER DEVAPRIAM

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES GENEVA

... We pray for the peace of his soul and send this expression of our sincere condolences to the C.S.I. and to all his family members.

EMILIO CASTRO
General Secretary.

* * * *

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND LONDON

... We offer our heartfelt concern to the C.S.I. in the loss of its Moderator and to the people of the Diocese of Nandyal in the loss of their Bishop, through the unexpected and sudden death of the Most Rev. Dr. B. Ryder Devapriam.

REV. GORDON SHAW
Secretary.

* * * *

FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA LONDON

... We have been shocked, dismayed and saddened at the news of his death....

REV. D. BARRIE SCOPES
Secretary.

* * * *

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION LONDON

On behalf of the whole C.W.M. family as well as all of us here at Livingstone House, I wish to express sincerest sympathy...

D. PREMAN NILES
General Secretary.

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION LONDON

Be assured that we remember you all in our prayers here...

THE REV. CANON SAMUEL VAN CULIN
Secretary General.

* * * *

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EDINBURGH

It is hard to see God's will in such events, but perhaps he is closest to us at a time like this.

REV. DR. JOHN P. L. MUNRO
Asia Secretary.

* * * *

REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS

We realise that the Synod of the C.S.I. has lost a creative and innovative moderator...

MRS. L. M. DULFER-LUIJENDIJK
Section Asia.

* * * *

KINDER NOTHILFE DUISBURG

We greatly impressed both by his commitment to the ministry for children in need and by his energetic leadership in devising proper steps for further qualification of such ministry. He will remain in our memories as a great Churchman and theological scholar who in a rare way combined sensitive concern, utmost personal integrity and administrative dynamism.

REV. DR. HANNS P. KEILING
Chairman.
FRANK BOSHOLD
Director.

**THE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES AND MISSIONS (EMS)
STUTT GART**

Assembled around the body we remembered his zeal and vision for the Church in local and ecumenical perspective. We were comforted by the presence of Bishop Richard Lipp, Bishop Prakasharao, Captain Bedford, Dr. Christopher Furtado, Rev. Naidu, Rev. Fieber . . .

DR. JORG SCHNELLBACH
General Secretary.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U.S.A.

My last memory of his vigorous spirit and penetrating insight is when some of us from the Presbyterian Church sat with him and other bishops and office-bearers of the Synod, on the beach in Madras and talked about the Church particular and universal. The session was reminiscent of New Testament images . . .

THE REVD. DR. VICTOR E. MAKARI
Area Associate.

NEW YORK

Shocked and deeply grieved by the news about the Moderator. Our prayers are with you.

—ERIC GASS

REFORMED CHURCHES IN AMERICA

About a month ago I received the 'South India Churchman' in which Bishop Devapriam wrote a short article entitled 'The Lord is Risen Indeed'. He ended the writing with, 'And that is why the Church had said . . . I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . and the life of the world to come, Amen'. We are grateful for Bishop Devapriam's faith and witness.

ELAINE TANIS
World Mission Secretary, Asia.

**THE UNITED SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF
THE GOSPEL (USPG) LONDON**

We shall be remembering you all in our prayers here . . .

THE REVD. CANON PETER B. PRICE
Secretary.

THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

You will be able to share many wonderful memories of him and look back in gratitude to God for his life of ministry and service.

GEOFFREY T. MONKS
Moderator, Perth.

CSI COMMISSARY IN BRITAIN

Please assure Mrs. Devapriam that very many people will be remembering her in their prayers.

—MISS M. RUTH ANSTLEY
London

**INTERCHURCH ORGANIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION NETHERLANDS**

We were deeply shocked . . . He was in Netherlands during the last week of August but we did not have the opportunity to meet him . . .

MR. FONS VAN DER VELDEN
Coordinator.

CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA

We share the sorrow with his bereaved family and with C.S.I. In his death we have lost a friend, guide and dynamic leader. Peace be to you all.

BISHOP SANTRAM
CNI General Secretary.

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH

Deeply grieved at the sudden demise of Moderator Devapriam. Kindly convey the condolence of our Church.

—METROPOLITAN, Tiruvalla.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

We do not know why our dear ones are called Home when we least expect it. We are called upon to surrender ourselves to the will of God. But our great hope is in the affirmation of the life to come and we are sure that we will meet our dear brother on the golden shores.

REVD. LUNG MUANA
General Secretary.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY LONDON

I met him very briefly at Kodaikanal and I was deeply impressed by his insights in the witness of the C.S.I. and on the role of the partner churches and mission organisations . . .

REVD. DR. PETER LEUNG
Regl. Secretary.

Letter from Heubach, Germany

Dear Mrs. Devapriam,

Dear Professor Koshy,

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Nandyal, South India,

Bishop Devapriam passed away last Friday, the 4th September, 92 in the parsonage at Heubach as a result of a heart-attack.

We, the brothers and sisters of the Church District of Schwäbisch Gmünd are shocked and deeply saddened by this sudden death. We share our pain of losing your beloved Bishop, your beloved father and husband in such a tragic way.

We pray to God with you, to God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may take our brother and Bishop into His Kingdom, and that He may comfort you and us with His great strength. We fail to understand God's will and beseech Him to uphold you and us in the terror of this death and our immense sorrow.

Yesterday during our Sunday service we bade farewell to Bishop Devapriam. It was actually planned that he should pray with us and preach the Gospel. But it turned to be our sad duty to pray for him and to implore God's grace on him, on you and all of us together. Today, Monday at 11 O'Clock we will hold a Memorial Service around the open coffin and then seal it and send it to you. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

How Bishop Devapriam's death came about is a mystery to us. On Friday morning, 4th September he took the train from Duisburg to Stuttgart. En route, as he told us later, he already felt unwell. The cold climate and his asthma gave him trouble. The train reached Stuttgart around 3 p.m. Dr. Furtado and I, the Revd. Fieber, met him at Stuttgart Central Station. We drove straight to EMS and the flat of Dr. Furtado, had a cup of tea

and something to eat. As we were showing Bishop Devapriam the room he was to occupy on his return from Schwäbisch Gmünd, he suffered an attack of asthma. After taking his medicine he felt better, and we drove to Schwäbisch Gmünd and on to the parsonage in Heubach. On arrival I called the nearest doctor, because he felt his breathing getting heavier again. The doctor came quickly and examined him. In the middle of the examination Bishop Devapriam fell unconscious. The heart stopped beating. Immediately the doctor took measures to resuscitate him. Another doctor and 2 more doctors on emergency call did all they could for two hours to rescue his life. It was in vain.

While the doctors were fighting for his life, my wife and I were praying for his life. With you we must submit to God's will that He has called Bishop Devapriam Himself.

We mourn with you and pray God for His comfort, guidance and help.

One great concern we have, and it was one which all filled Bishop Devapriam: that as sisters and brothers in the Name of Jesus we belong together and that together we may proceed on the road of partnership. We are convinced that this is the will of Jesus and the dearest wish of your Bishop Ryder Devapriam.

God, the Lord, the Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, bless you and us together. We stand under His words 'I live and you will live also'. (John 14:19.)

In loving mourning
Your sisters and brothers in
Heubach and the Church District
of Schwäbisch Gmünd

(Sd.) REVD. WERNER FIEBER

THE MOST REVEREND DR. RYDER DEVAPRIAM

I first met Bishop Ryder when I visited India for a long sabbatical leave in 1984, and remember his kindly welcome to the CSI Synod meetings in Hyderabad. He took me under his wing, and told me how to behave in India. Later I stayed with him and Saro in the parsonage at Cuddapah where he was then pastor.

When I returned to England we corresponded frequently, and I followed the progress of his election as Bishop. I was sorry not to be able to be there but later he came to England and stayed with us in our Rectory at Witney—a visit he was to repeat on three further occasions. Once he conducted our parish confirmation—he preached several times in our church and I was able to show him Oxford, Gloucester and some of the lovely country that we have here. One of my curates (The Rev. James Barnett—was able to visit India twice and help him in the training of ordinands and clergy). Later he appointed me as his Commissary in England.

In January this year I was able to visit India again and attend the CSI Synod at Tirunelveli where he was

elected Moderator. After the Synod I travelled back with him by car the long journey to Nandyal, and was able to share in the tumultuous welcome that was given him by the Diocese.

On the first Sunday after his election I accompanied him to the Cathedral of the Holy Cross—and was able to preach and say something about him. Later that week he and I went together to visit Giddalur where we stayed the night in the old missionary bungalow—on our way back we walked in forested hills together.

I shall remember his smiling face as we prayed together outside his bungalow before I left India for U.K. He was a loving pastor—a searching Christian—and a very good friend—and I shall miss him very much. May he rest in peace, grow in grace, and rise in glory.

THE REVEREND CANON ROLAND MEREDITH

Witney, England

SEPTEMBER 1992

Moderator R. D. Ryder My Old Pal Dear

MR. N. CLEMENT BARNABAS, Bangalore

Ryder my old pal dear
Thoughts of our childhood came to cheer
Pranks countless I begin to cherish
So comical they are never will vanish
Laughter stomachful always create
In every sought company of our playmate
Whether play or work you surpassed everyone
In both alike laurels immortalable you won
Bringing fame and name to the Alma mater you belonged

Never in the annals earned anyone who longed
Never dreamt we to such an eminence you rise
In life and death drawn you much praise
But the awful shade of death
Rudely clinched life balanced on breath
All dark and deolate now we are
Everyone so unconsoingly cried
Oh, surely, Lord, Thou hast been here
Our friend truly has not died... he is living with thee.

Bishop Richard Lipp's Letter

Extract from a letter by Bishop Richard Lipp, Commissary of the CSI in Europe, written to his daughter in India.

9-1992

'.... We are all deeply shaken by this sudden death. God's ways are inscrutable.

9-1992

The Memorial Service for Bishop Devapriam was held 11 a.m. today. I have just returned from it.

I reached Heubach early, shortly before 10-30 a.m., just as they were placing the body in the coffin. Bishop was robed in his snow-white cassock and was lying serenely on the pillows. The purple cord they had put around the back of his neck like a stole. Majestically it reached down to his feet. I told them that it is to be tied around the waist, which we did. Bishop's cross the Revd. Fieber brought just before 11 o'clock.

Here lay the Moderator of a church with a membership of over 2 million members.

I stood silently by the side of the coffin and prayed the Liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer. Slowly others began to arrive. Vroni Kölle, Revd. and Mrs. Richter, Captain Bedford, Bishop Prakasa Rao, Revd. Michael Naidu and the representatives from EMS.

I was asked whether I wanted to say anything. No, I had no words. 'But if there is time, I will say a prayer from the Book of Common Prayer—a prayer the Moderator would have known by heart in Telugu.' After my prayer Captain Bedford spoke, and then I was requested by Revd. Fieber to give the blessing:

'The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and mind in the knowledge and love of

God. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.'

After the service I shared something of the history of the Diocese of Nandyal during the early years of the CSI before returning home again.'

(Translated from the German by Julie Lipp Nathaniel)

Prayer at the Memorial Service for Bishop Devapriam, 7-9-1992

Lord, our God, Father through Jesus Christ, Bishop Devapriam is dead. It was all so sudden. We cannot understand the death, which came between us so harshly and irrevocably.

We pour out to you our grief and stand before you with all that which distresses us and pains our hearts.

The wife, the daughter—they cannot grasp it. The sisters and brothers in Inuia—in Madras, Bangalore and Nandyal, are dismayed and paralysed by sorrow.

With them we bewail the death of our brother Devapriam. We stretch out our hand for support and consolation, and for the strength which is greater than ours. We cry out to you. For you alone can hold life safely even in death. Help us to trust, although we do not understand.

Amen.

(Translated from the German by Dr. Christy Furtado, EMS, Stuttgart)

TRIBUTES

Tribute to my Bishop, the Most Revd. Dr. B. Ryder Devapriam
MR. LESSLEY NATHANIEL, *Nandyal*

For the past 3 years I had the privilege and joy to be closely associated with Bishop Ryder, as he was known by many. In fact he was directly responsible for my wife and myself finding ourselves back here in the CSI as fraternal workers sent from Germany. What happened to us, was—as we came to understand—quite characteristic of Bishop Ryder's way with people. Within an hour of a meeting which came about more by chance than design, and prior to which we had no any idea of what it would lead to, he had us agreeing to coming to serve in his diocese. 'What are you doing here in Germany?' was his question after a few minutes of conversation. 'I could do with your services in Nandyal.' Even we knew that Nandyal was not the most attractive of prospects. Nevertheless... And he was as good as his word. The green light from the CSI Synod came sooner than we ever cared to anticipate. Three years later almost to the day of our arriving in Nandyal he succumbed to a heart attack in the parsonage of Heubach, quite close to our home in Germany.

Bishop Ryder succeeded in jolting us out of a well-settled existence in Germany and confronted us with the challenges of an uncertain and anything but easy role in his diocese. Even though during the initial year and a half in particular we were often at the point of asking ourselves the question whether we had made a mistake in coming and whether our presence served any useful purpose at all, we always found inspiration and courage in the fact that Bishop Ryder was at the helm of the diocese. We admired the leadership which was natural to him without being assertive. All who came to him whatever their position could feel at ease with him because he had an easy manner without compromising his authority. His dignity did not depend on his having to stand on his dignity.

Our Bishop had no problems about sharing responsibility, in fact he made a point of giving responsibility to others, especially also to young people, and then expect them 'to deliver the goods'. Far from expecting sycophancy, he encouraged people to hold their own views, and to take initiative. Many a time when he was approached to chair a meeting or preside over a function or to reach a decision on some matter he would say: 'You get on with it. What have we appointed you for?' Or: 'You don't need me for that.'

He had a particular vision to encourage young people to serve the church. Regular visits of SOMA teams from the USA were aimed to inspire the young people of Nandyal for a similar evangelistic mission in their

own context. In the first team from Nandyal to Germany with a view to entering into a closer partnership with one of the church Districts there, he sent a young lay person, a young Sister of the CSI Sisterhood together with a senior head-master. In a similar way he encouraged the women in the diocese to share pastoral as well as administrative responsibility with the men. Openly appreciated the dedication and effective work of 2 women pastors, and encouraged them by offering them opportunities for studies abroad. My wife well remembers the answer he gave back in 1988 to her question on his views on the ordination of women: 'I do not ordain men or women, I ordain priests'.

In the 7 years that he was its Bishop the Diocese of Nandyal underwent a metamorphosis. Nandyal lagged behind in so many ways due to its remaining outside the CSI for so long. It had become isolated from the fellowship within the CSI and from overseas partners. It had been turned in on itself. But within a short time Bishop Ryder instilled new confidence in the people, showing them that Nandyal had a future. Bishop Ryder continued not only the spurt of building new churches; he had a zeal to revive the tradition of providing educational institutions of high standing. Doggedly he pursued the proposal to start a B.Ed. College. Schools for the disabled were very much a concern of his, so that in addition to the Blind School, he had made contact with persons and organisations who could help in starting a School for the Deaf. Against all odds of finding dedicated doctors who would work in the rural setting under diocesan conditions, he saw to a revival of medical work in the 2 hospitals. Nor did he overlook the needs of the poor in the villages. He embarked on a Sericulture Project which is now well-established in pilot villages. A Housing Scheme for poor Christian families is in its initial stages. For the young boys with little education he set up a Rural Technical and Vocational Training Centre. It is not possible nor the place to enumerate all the impulsive and achievements of Bishop Ryder Devapriam here. Only one visit must not go unmentioned. Bishop Ryder not only believed in the catholicity of the Church of Christ—that is the Church which is world wide, he sought to give concrete expression to this by looking for fellowship and exchange with Christians and churches in other parts of our world, and not only the West. This was of paramount importance to him. As a result, Nandyal doors were open to visitors from various partner churches. The first steps had also been taken, committing the Diocese of Nandyal and the Church District of Schwäbisch Gmünd to a first partnership. It was in the parsonage of the pastorate in Schwäbisch Gmünd District that Bishop Ryder breathed his last. The death of Bishop Ryder

all too sudden—a shock for which we were totally prepared. There was still so much to be accomplished ; my hopes rested on him. The ship was on its course, at the shallows and reefs are still around. In this situation it is as if the rudder of the ship was suddenly torn away, or the captain swept overboard.

We, my wife and I, grieve the loss of our Bishop who had become a friend. Someone who was ever ready to throw out a challenge, but with whom it was possible to enjoy one's leisure also, with whom it was good to be, and even to have an argument. Bishop's

Compound, Nandyal will never be the same without his vibrant presence. We look for comfort in our faith that God is still in charge that He is the rudder and His hands are at the helm of the Diocese of Nandyal and the Church of South India as a whole. Our best memorial to Bishop Ryder is that we endeavour to continue the work in his spirit.

LESSLEY NATHANIEL

Treasurer and Financial Administrator
Diocese of Nandyal

BISHOP'S COLLEGE AIR-CONDITIONED ARCHIVE

I am glad to report that in October last year we have established an air-conditioned ARCHIVE which holds old manuscripts of the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Oxford Mission, Tibetan Collection (Buddhist Golden Book) and others. I hereby request all those churches and Institutions to send their old records to Bishop's College for safe and scientific preservation. For further information write to the Principal, Bishop's College, 224 Acharya Jagdish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta-700 017.

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Face To Face Lord

MR. K. MICHAEL VIJAYARAO, *Nandyal*

'Our forbears, the missionaries, early and late
Overcame their difficulties and differences
And witnessed steadfastly.
So shall we in faith and unity of purpose,
March together growing in love and trust.'

True to the message that BISHOP RYDER DEVAPRIAM gave after he was enthroned to the episcopate of Nandyal he invested his energy and spirit to meet and succour the needs of the Diocese, material and spiritual.

Appropriate it is to recall the memory of Father Arthur Frederick Ryder Bird, one of the early missionaries among the great galaxy of the missionaries, after whom Bishop Ryder had been named. It was during the tenure of Father Bird the SPG High School, Nandyal was established in 1884. Almost a century later during the period of Ryder Devapriam's episcopacy three Upper Primary Schools were upgraded to High Schools—Holy Cross School, Nandyal; SPG Girls School, Kalasapad; Christ Church School, Giddalur. Three Primary Schools were upgraded to Upper Primary Schools at Govindapalle, Badvel and Muddanur. New Holy Cross School, Nandyal; Christ Church School, Kurnool; Augustine School, Kalasapad; St. John's School, Regadagudur and St. Peter's School at Proddatur have been established. This string of schools is aided by the 'Compassion for India'. Of these, the New Holy Cross is the premier one and will blossom forth as a full blown High School in 1993/1994.

Father Bird was a great cricketer. Bishop Ryder Devapriam was an outstanding football and hockey player and represented the Andhra University in the football tournaments. For four years consecutively he distinguished himself as the 'champion' of athletics at Andhra Christian College, Guntur. Even so did he run the race as a shepherd of his flock in the Diocese of Nandyal.

To uphold tradition, to correlate biblical teaching and to engender humanly helpful and hopeful conditions of body, mind and spirit had been his deep commitments.

The Rehabilitation of the visually handicapped, Nandyal; the Rural Rehabilitation Project, Giddalur, the Tailoring Centres Nandyal and Proddatur and the Human Settlements Project, Santajutur, the RTVT Centre, Nandyal and the Shopping Complex, Proddatur, bear ample testimony to the steady endeavours made by Bishop Ryder.

Visionary as he was,
View did he of the wider growth;
Visitations wherefore did he arrange;

Visualising the efficacy of fellowship.
Forged partnership with the Church in Germany
Sharing of the communion of faith and fellowship
Sharing of experiences in service
Sharing of experiences in witness and
Sharing of the joy of growth of the Church of
Nandyal
Sharing of the world-wide fellowship with
'SOMA'

And this helped Nandyal Diocese to brighten its image with the impress of the dynamism of Bishop Ryder Devapriam. The entire Diocesan work was streamlined and it transformed the attitude of people towards Nandyal Diocese both from inside and outside the country.

How and what was he endowed with? The rich Anglican heritage blended with the collaborative realism of the Church of South India, an enlightened parent church committed to the cause of education and a spouse devoted and prayerful were his spiritual endowments.

Scholastic and journalistic training led him to teaching, educational administration and eventually he answered the call to priesthood. Theological studies (Bishop's College, Calcutta) and abroad (Theological General Seminary, Moremick, New York) and ministry in India and abroad caused the mantle of shepherding the flock in episcopacy of Nandyal fall on him in August 1988 and that of the Church of South India in January 1990. From a school teacher to the Primate of the Church of South India he was indeed a 'Soldier of the Cross'.

During the short span of a little over seven months he stirred the imagination and beckoned the young generation to a state of disciplined democratic outlook envisaging an order of the Church to engage in a realistic debate and to arrive at a reasonably informed judgement cultivating a perspective and looking far beyond the petty, immediate and short-lived consequences.

An open-mind free from prejudice and fear
Formalities he gloried not in
But counselled to be involved in the concerns of
the Church
An analytical thinking, ripping apart the layers of
influence
And peering at the Kernel of truth
What enthralled him was.
Faced the Truth even as he sang,
On the eve before his departure to the heavenly
abode

'Face to face Lord I know you
.....
Face to face I see you'.

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